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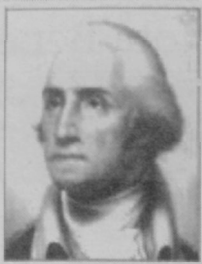
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GW Professors Travel as Part of India Project

By ANITA VALLIANI
News Editor

In late January, more than 50 legal professionals from across the world, including the Law School's own Professors Martin Adelman and Shamnad Basheer and Dean Susan Karamanian, traveled to India in conjunction with GW Law School's India Project. Launched in 2003 by Law School faculty and alumni, the India Project is a partnership among Indian lawyers, judges, business leaders and academics and their counterparts in the West, which confronts issues relating to the field of intellectual property (IP) in India.

Why India? The British Broadcasting Corporation reported in 2006 that the Indian economy, with its GDP growth rate of 9.2 percent, was among the fastest growing in the world. According to a 2006 International Monetary Fund study, however, purchasing power parity per capita in India ranks 117th in the world. In other words, the vast majority of the population in the world's largest liberal democracy is not appropriately benefiting from the impressive growth in its nation's economy. An often highly-educated work

force, particularly in math and science, labors for relatively low wages.

Availability of cheap, productive labor has, over the course of the past decade, made India the destination of choice for many of the world's most innovative technology companies. In fact, growth in the nation's technological and financial sectors has been so extraordinary that it has resulted in significant strains on its domestic legal system.

At the turn of the century, it became particularly evident that India needed assistance in implementing law and enforcement mechanisms so that it could meet its obligations under the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Not one to shirk responsibility (or, opportunity, for that matter), the Law School rose to the challenge. And, as such, the India Project was born.

According to Professor Martin Adelman, Co-Director of the Intellectual Property Law Program, the India Project is largely indebted to the "labors of love" of Raj Dave, LLM '03, who conditioned a donation to the Law School of his \$5,000 Finnegan Prize, awarded for excellence in

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(Right to Left) Professor Shamnad Basheer, Sunita Sreedharan, LLM '06, Dean Susan Karamanian, Vandana Mamidanna, LLM '06, Priyanka Kotheri, LLM '06 and Professor Martin Adelman at the Intellectual Property Rights Summit in Mumbai, India, January 15 -20, 2007.

Alcohol Dependency at GW Law

By SEAN CONWAY
Staff Writer

Like many law students, 2003 GW Law graduate Grace Culley drank to relieve the stresses of law school. She drank after exams, she drank on weekends and she drank after a night of studying.

Culley said that alcohol played a significant part in her law school experience. "The first night of orientation, I went out to a local bar and got drunk with many of my classmates," Culley said. "After that, weekend partying would start for me at Thirsty Thursday in the late afternoon, and it would progress through the night to Bar Review."

The drinking continued throughout her three years at GW. Although she graduated with honors, sat on the Moot Court Board, and was the Pro Bono Program Student Chair, Culley thinks her drinking severely affected her classroom experience. After her first year, Culley remembers skipping classes where atten-

dance was not taken or being hung over for those classes she did attend.

"It wasn't even as though I was an exception," she said. "There were many, many students abusing alcohol like myself. I'm not sure if the Law School did not have many social events that excluded alcohol, or if I just did not pay any attention to such events, but I felt as though all social activities involved drinking."

Experiences such as Culley's are not rare on the GW campus or at most law schools throughout the country. A 1993 Association of American Law Schools survey of 3,400 law students

found that 3.3% of law students said they needed help to control their substance abuse, and approximately 12% percent said they abused alcohol during law school. That translates to more than 16,000 law students with alcohol abuse problems.

Administrators at GW Law are beginning to take a second look at alcohol's role in the law school experience. "Law school is a stressful time in a person's life," said Dean of Student Affairs Renee DeVigne. "Part of our job as a law school is to teach our students how to effectively deal with stress, because stress will not subside once

school is over, and in many cases it will increase."

During the 2006 1L student orientation, Culley, now a member of the DC Bar Association's Lawyer Counseling Committee, spoke to incoming students on the effects of binge drinking. The Lawyer Counseling Program advertises itself as "a free, confidential, effective program for lawyers, judges, and law students who have problems that interfere with their professional or personal lives."

"It's important that students understand that programs such as this exist," said Culley, who addressed her drinking problem after her graduation. "My law school career may have been different had I known about such programs."

The school provided information regarding the Lawyer Counseling Program to every incoming 1L this year. Dean DeVigne also notes that a number of other small initiatives were successfully launched this year. The SBA offered

See ALCOHOL page 4

"It wasn't even as though I was an exception. There were many, many students abusing alcohol like myself. I'm not sure if the Law School did not have many social events that excluded alcohol, or if I just did not pay any attention to such events, but I felt as though all social activities involved drinking."
~ Grace Culley

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News

The PRICE of CONVENIENCE

HOW DOES THE NEW CAFÉ IN LISNER HALL MEASURE UP?

With the introduction of Uptowner Café last week, *Nota Bene* conducted a price comparison of the latest addition to the law school and a few of its competitors.

ITEM	Uptowner Café	Au Bon Pain	Marvin Center	Elsewhere Nearby	Courtside Café at Georgetown Law
Water	1.39	1.59	1.42 at District Market	1.25 from law school vending machines	1.25
Coffee	1.25, 1.50, 1.75	1.39, 1.59, 1.79	1.50, 1.70, 1.80 at Ground for Change	1.17, 1.45, 1.60 at Capitol Grounds*	1.45, 1.60, 1.80
Sandwiches	6.25 – 6.95	4.50 – 6.19		4.50 – 5.95	4.89 – 5.95
turkey sandwich	6.25	5.95	Turkey Sandwich at Einsten Bros: 5.19	Turkey Club at Capitol Grounds: 5.95	Roast Turkey Sandwich: 5.95
Soups	3.50, 4.50 2 varieties	3.29, 4.49 10 varieties	n/a	n/a	n/a
Soft Drinks	1.39 (8oz)	1.39, 1.89 fountain drinks	1.42 at District Market	1.25 from law school vending machines	0.85 – 1.05 fountain drinks
Tea	1.25, 1.50, 1.75	1.39 (all sizes)	1.35 (all sizes) at Grounds for Change	1.35, 1.65, 1.95 at Capitol Grounds	1.35, 1.50, 1.65
Pastries	1.99 – 2.69	1.59 – 2.19	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fruit Bar	3.00 8oz (5.99/lb)	2.99 12oz (4.00/lb)		* Capitol Grounds Coffee is located at 2100 Penn, roughly 3 blocks from the law school	
1 Banana	75 cents	79 cents	99 cents at District Market (food court)		

Brian Garner Speaks at GW

By MOIZ ALI
Staff Writer

On January 23, 2007, Bryan Garner, editor in chief of *Blacks Law Dictionary* and author of numerous other legal writing guides, spoke at the GW Law School about the importance of communication skills in the legal profession.

While still a law student at the University of Texas, Garner began his legal writing career working on *A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage*. Since then, he also has authored *The Winning Brief: 100 Tips for Persuasive Briefing in Trial and Appellate Courts*, *Garner's Modern American Usage*, *Elements of Legal Drafting*, and *The Elements of Legal Style*.

As professional communicators, Garner said, lawyers are required to be expert writers and skilled advocates. He emphasizes the value of economical word choice and simple jargon when he advises not only law students but also large firms and in-house counsel on briefing and persuasive writing.

Garner also stressed the importance of structure and grammar in legal writing. To emphasize his point, Garner quizzed students attending the lecture to test their grammar savvy, asking what is the plural of octopus, how to spell "minuscule," and what is the plural of money (as in "state tax money").

Surprisingly, Garner's quiz stumped most students in attendance. In fact, only one person attending was able to answer all three questions correctly. (The plural of octopus is octopuses. The word minuscule is commonly misspelled as "miniscule." The plural of state tax money is state tax moneys, not state tax monies.)

Ultimately, Garner's speech demonstrated how difficult even simple writing can be and inspired students to hone their writing and drafting abilities. □



Michael Elliot, 1L, enjoys an afternoon meal at the new Up Towner Cafe in Lisner Hall.

NEWS

Senator Schumer Visits GW to Promote New Book

By AMY CASSIDY
Staff Writer

Although the 2008 presidential election is still more a year away, the road to victory is foremost in the minds of many – including Senator Chuck Schumer.

Senator Schumer, Senior Senator from New York visited The George Washington University on the evening of February 13, 2007 to promote his new book *Positively American* with a speaking event and book signing.

The book, which focuses on the need for the Democratic Party to present a cohesive platform in order to prevail in the 2008 elections, is written using small anecdotes about a fictional family – the Baileys.

The Baileys are a middle class family of five with all the struggles and triumphs of the quintessential American family. These anecdotes are intended show what the middle class needs now and how the Democratic Party can choose to help.

Senator Schumer's imaginary family, though new to the general public, has been with him since he was first elected to the New York State Legislature at the age of 23. "Throughout my career I have asked myself, what is good of that Baileys," Senator Schumer said. He hopes his new book will get more Democrats thinking about the Baileys and their friends. "This is a pivotal year in the politics of the middle class; whoever wins the middle class wins '08," he added.

Senator Schumer acknowledges that the middle class is skeptical about politics and that it poses an interesting challenge for Democrats. The middle class, according to Senator Schumer, wants to feel safe and does not trust that Democrats can provide safety. It is morally opposed to abortion but expects a government of free people to be pro-choice. It believes in the American dream and success and will withdraw support if Democrats

look down on it for pursuing its self-interest.

But Senator Schumer sees a generational shift at hand. Like those who voted Democrat for the first time in the New Deal Era or went Republican with Ronald Reagan, he believes that a generation of life-long Democrats

can be created in this election cycle. His book is his own manifesto on how to change the perception that Democrats have "principles but not platform" and make this possibility a reality.

In truth, Senator Schumer's sentiments amount to envy of the Republican Party's ability to effectively communicate what it stands for. According to the Senator, the Republican Party won the 2004 presidential election with only eight words: "war in Iraq, cut taxes, no gay marriage." However, its message was much more pervasive. In those short eight words, the Republican Party told Americans that it was against terrorism, in favor of smaller government and defended family values.

The Senator's personal dilemma is determining what the Democratic Party's

eight words should be. Although his own eight words for the party are still in the works, he invited party faithful to submit suggestions at www.positivelyamerican-book.com.

Whether or not Democrats can establish eight key words, Senator Schumer stressed that candidates could not rely on recent campaign strategies. "We can't just campaign in the negative again," he said. Recognizing that the recent midterm victories by the Democratic Party are the result of attacking the current administration's policies, the Senator reminded Democrats that they will have to stand for something in 2008. "We won't have George Bush to kick around in 2008."

The platform he suggests is something he calls the "fifty percent solution." In effect, this platform promises to take a few specific things about this country that are good and increase them fifty percent while decreasing a specified few that are bad by fifty percent. These include reducing cancer deaths, reducing property tax, reducing childhood obesity, reducing abortions while remaining pro-choice, increasing math and reading scores of K-12 students, decreasing reliance of fossil fuels, increasing the number of college graduates per year, and decreasing illegal immigration while increasing legal immigration. Though the Senator did not discuss how he intended to do these

things, he assured the students present that his book held all the details.

Senator Schumer called his plan "ambitious but attainable" and has encouraged all of the Democratic presidential

hopefuls to "rip-off" any part of his plan that they like. Though he could not say for certain his book would result in a cohesive platform for his party, he was sure of one thing: "Republicans are wrong for America and Americans know it, but they will still vote for them if the Democrats don't have a platform."

Though he declined to speculate on the Demo-

cratic presidential field, Senator Schumer did take the opportunity to weigh in on the Republican presidential hopefuls. After calling the Republican field weak, he accuse Senator John McCain of "selling his birthright" and becoming a "Bush acolyte" and Congressman Tom Tancredo of being "way off the deep end." The Senator also asserted that Rudy Giuliani could not win a Republican primary because he is pro-choice, pro gay rights, and pro gun control.

When asked by the student's in attendance who the best Republican hopeful was, the Senator picked Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, though he doubted the Governor "has any real beliefs" and is not sure "the theocrats will vote for a Mormon." □

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INDIA PROJECT from page 1.

IP writing, on a delegation's being sent to India.

Dave said he donated the money because, while the Law School had been relatively supportive of the India Project, it had refused to contribute to it financially. "In 2004, when we decided to form the India Project," Dave said, "Dean [Roger] Trangsrud put forth the sole criteria that we not ask [him] for money."

Dave said that those individuals who wished to serve as delegates to the India Project trip matched his monetary gift by contributing at least \$5,000 of their own to the Law School. Judges who accompanied the delegation, however, were exempt from this formality. And, so, the first 61 member delegation traveled to India in early 2005.

Not too much has changed since the early days of the India Project and, according to Dean Susan Karamanian, the Law School is still indebted to Dave, who now works as a partner at Morrison & Foerster in Washington, DC, for his devotion.

"This year's India Project trip was another great success," Dean Karamanian

said. "Thanks to the organizational skills and energy of our alumnus Dave..., we brought the world's leading IP experts to Mumbai, Bangalore and Goa, where we held high profile events that focused on the challenges IP faces in the world's largest democracy."

Among the many "high profile events" in which delegates engaged was a moot court session, which, among other things, allowed delegates to consider the differences and similarities between American and Indian patent law. Participants argued as to whether a fictional supplier who sold liquid indigo dye prepared by catalytic hydrogenation had indeed infringed on patents awarded to a fictional German Professor by the Eu-

ropean Patent Office, the US Patent and Trademark Office, the Japanese Patent Office and the Indian Patent Office.

"This year's India Project trip was another great success. Thanks to the organizational skills and energy of our alumnus Dave..., we brought the world's leading IP experts to Mumbai, Bangalore and Goa, where we held high profile events that focused on the challenges IP faces in the world's largest democracy."
~ Dean Karamanian

Other high profile events included keynote addresses and discussion sessions hosted by internationally-renowned legal authorities, many of whom were judges. According to Dean Karamanian, the India Project trip has, since its inception, attracted participation of some of the biggest names in law, particularly highly-respected judges from across the world.

"We were fortunate that GW alumnus, Judge Randall Rader of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fed-

eral Circuit, attended all of the summits and gave keynote addresses," Dean

Karamanian said. "Other distinguished judges were also active participants, [including]... Judge Ronald White of the US District Court of the Northern District of California, Judge Ryoichi Mimura of the Tokyo High Court, the former Senior Judge of the UK Patent Court, Sir Hugh Laddie, and Justice B.N. Srikrishna, a distinguished justice formerly of the Indian Supreme Court."

Prof. Adelman said that Judge Rader, "the rock star of patent law," was largely responsible for the India Project delegation's distinguished list of attendees. According to Prof. Adelman, "people want to go [to India] because Judge Rader goes."

It must be noted that January's trip constituted only one part of the larger India Project, through which, among other things, the Law School has co-sponsored the first IP law school in India: the Rajiv Gandhi School of IP Law at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kharagpur. Other India Project initiatives include the impending creation of an India Studies Center at the Law School to consider issues of comparative constitutional law. □

NEWS

GW Law Helps Knock Down Legal Barriers, Sheet Rock in NOLA

By AMANDA NICOLE RENTZ
Special to Nota Bene

A group of 24 GW Law students met in New Orleans, Louisiana, on New Year's Day and prepared to spend the final week of their Winter Break contributing their time and service to the people of the "City That Care Forgot." Their experience made them appreciate the irony that accompanies that nickname.

More than 500 law students from 28 different law schools volunteered alongside the GW Law students on the Gulf Coast through the Student Hurricane Network (SHN), a national student-led group that pairs law students with various public interest organizations that serve victims of Hurricane Katrina.

GW Law students and students from other schools were paired with six organizations. Other participating schools included American, Georgetown, Vermont, Thomas Cooley, South Texas, Stanford, NYU, Fordham, Pittsburgh, Missouri-Columbia, UCLA, Kansas and St. John's College.

Many students confronted the legal problems that followed in the wake

of Hurricane Katrina in fields such as criminal justice, affordable housing, workers' rights, government benefits and environmental concerns. Other students spent their week with wheelbarrows and sledgehammers in the Lower Ninth Ward, gutting homes so that displaced residents who wished to move back could start over.

Some students visited a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trailer park outside of Baton Rouge to inform residents about the New Orleans Survivor Council. The Council is made up of a group of Katrina survivors who have organized themselves to help the dispersed community work together to rebuild and become a political voice.

One student who worked on legal issues was Monica Fuentes, 1L. Fuentes worked with the New Orleans Workers Center, an organization that aims to ensure that guest workers' rights are protected in New Orleans.

Fuentes' group met with day laborers in the parking lot where they were picked up by contractors every morning. The group collected wage claims and data regarding how often contractors failed to pay workers for their labor. In the afternoons, Fuentes' group attempted to connect with

the contractors to work out payment arrangements.

"The day laborers were just so grateful to know that someone cared about and was aware of the injustice being inflicted on them," Fuentes said. "I think that our presence gave them a sense that they weren't alone and [that] there are people who will stand up for their rights."

Another volunteer, Jenn Khouri, 2L, worked with Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) to gut houses in New Orleans.

"At first, the job seemed a little futile," Khouri said, "but as we were shown around the neighborhoods in which we worked, we quickly saw otherwise. Houses that had previously been gutted by volunteers were in fact being restored and lived in by their owners. It was uplifting to see that volunteers are providing a service integral to the restoration of New Orleans."

Students who participated in the SHN program agreed that the driven, hard-working and underpaid people they met had a lasting impression on them. The GW Law volunteers were in return praised by their team leaders as some of the best volunteer groups they had hosted.

Khouri said of her group's team leader that "after busting open a wa-

terbed and acting like the mammoth roaches inside were ants, I think we were all pretty surprised at how honestly and unassumingly he opened up to us about how Katrina had torn up the city and, in many ways, his life.

"We were pretty surprised to find out that, for some reason, [our group's team leader] found us funny," Khouri said. "Maybe he was laughing at us a little—but, by the end it was clear that we had distinguished ourselves from the pack of volunteers and that, for some reason, he liked our little GW team. I've rarely felt so honored."

On February 20, 2007, Mardi

Gras, GW Law's SHN is hosting a Day of Solidarity in conjunction with other SHN groups at law schools across the country to raise awareness of the current state of the Gulf Coast recovery process.

Volunteers who went on the trip will pass out bracelets in the first floor lounges. Also, Spike Lee's documentary, *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*, will air in the Moot Court room, courtesy of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA). Pizza will be served at lunchtime.

Students interested in getting involved with SHN may visit www.studenthurricanenetwork.com or contact Kiva Feldman at kfeldman@law.gwu.edu. □

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~ Monica Fuentes

ALCOHOL from page 1.

alternative, alcohol-free orientation events in August, and the Division of Student Affairs has held a number of student receptions over the course of the school year that have not served alcohol.

Some law students are working with the school to help further these efforts. Tiffany May Joslyn, 3L, recently participated on the DC Bar Association's "Law School Task Force," a roundtable discussion that brought together the law school deans of student affairs of GW, Howard, Georgetown, American and Catholic Universities. The panel addressed pressing issues in the law school communities, including alcohol dependency.

"The problem isn't isolated to the George Washington campus," said Joslyn. "By working together, the schools can explore solutions to the problems faced by today's law students."

Joslyn thinks this is a good start but sees more work ahead. She hopes to

work with administrators to set up a peer mentoring system in which students with alcohol-related issues and questions can approach school-approved students as opposed to approaching administrators, which law students might be hesitant to do.

Other efforts could be as simple as adding information regarding the DC Lawyer Counseling Program to the GW Law website, Joslyn said. "Presently, GW Law's website directs students seeking counseling to the University-wide counseling program, and sometimes law students have issues that are particular to the law community," she said.

Dean DeVigne agreed that administration could be more involved in dealing with the issues of alcohol in law school, but foresees progress in the near future.

"Looking down the road, we would like to engage students, professors and administrators in an open discussion on how GW Law can effectively address alcohol dependency among some of our students," Dean DeVigne said. □

"The problem isn't isolated to the George Washington campus. By working together, the schools can explore solutions to the problems faced by today's law students."
~ Tiffany Joslyn

FARM LIFE

P	A	G	E		P	I	E	R		F	R	O	G	
A	C	R	E		S	I	D	L	E		R	A	R	E
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NEWS

Law School Study Abroad: A Chance to See the World

By ROB DICKSON
Staff Writer

Law school study abroad programs offer considerable opportunity for students seeking an adventure in their legal studies. With more than 100 American Bar Association approved programs, there are several options available to GW Law students.

GW Law sponsors two programs: one in Oxford, England, for the study of international human rights; and another in Munich, Germany, for the study of intellectual property.

For many students, law school presents the last opportunity to study in a foreign country. Michelle Rosenthal, 3L, who attended Dickinson Law School's study-abroad program in Florence, Italy, said, "I studied abroad in college and still didn't get it out of my system. This was my last chance I had to do something

like this."

"Studying abroad is great, especially if you've never been out of the country," said Sheila Driscoll, a career counselor at GW Law's Career Development Office. "I recommend that students participate in these programs their 1L years, but plan ahead, and have a good idea of what

they want to do in their 2L year, because your final law school years are dedicated to resume building," she said.

Studying law in a foreign country is not a long vacation, however.

"There are some [students] who think it is all just fun and games, but study abroad programs can be very challenging," Driscoll said. "To get the best of both worlds, I recommend shorter internships in addition to a study abroad program, like a research assistant or a judicial clerkship."

Rosenthal followed that course ex-

actly. After her month in Florence, she returned to Maryland and worked in the Attorney General's Office. "This was one of the few programs that went to Florence, and it was less expensive than other programs because it was run by a public law school," she said. "Also, the timing worked out for me because I still wanted to work for the summer. This program was five credits and only one month long."

For Rosenthal, studying abroad actually helped her

School's graduation requirements: Of the 84 credits required for graduation, 63 must

"To be able to graduate in three years, I needed to take summer classes anyway. Shockingly, I actually saved money going abroad because of the cost of credits at GW."
~Michelle Rosenthal

be for a grade. This is important because many study abroad program credits are not accepted for a letter grade.

"Getting those extra credits and getting outside

placement credit for my summer job helped me get nine credits that summer," she Rosenthal said. "That, in turn, has allowed me to have a smaller credit load in my third year with only 12 credits each semester. That makes a huge difference in my stress level."

Although studying abroad may not be the best addition to a resume, it might become a conversation topic during a law firm interview. "It was also a conversation starter in interviews because people thought it was great that I was able to pack so much into my summer," Rosenthal said.

"I studied abroad in college and still didn't get it out of my system. This was my last chance I had to do something like this."
~ Michelle Rosenthal

going abroad because of the cost of credits at GW," she said.

Students who plan on studying abroad should be mindful of the Law

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FEATURES

MIB: Medical Division

Long before Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones hit the screen as intergalactic secret agents, the MIB was doing undercover work of a distinctly terrestrial nature. Quietly amassing storehouses of medical information since 1902, the Medical Information Bureau maintains a sort of "Medical Credit Report" on roughly 20% of the United States population.

When you apply for life, health, or disability insurance, insurance companies collect information about factors that might affect your health or longevity, such as age, sex, drug or alcohol use, and other risk behaviors. There is a good chance that at one point or another, you have signed a waiver permitting an insurance provider to transmit this information to the MIB, which creates a record of the insurance findings.

Once stored in the MIB databases, participating MIB insurance companies may access your information in order to reduce insurance fraud. MIB stores these records for seven years, and some of their contents have been a closely held secret. Moreover, some of the information is inaccurate, which can cause major problems for some consumers. This arrangement has led privacy specialist Simson Garfinkel to refer to the MIB as the "official insurance agency gossip columnist."

The MIB does not store medical

test results, records, or X-rays. Though insurance companies are theoretically prohibited from rejecting insurance coverage based upon information in the MIB report, some evidence suggests insurance companies do just that.

So what does your MIB report say? The Fair Credit Reporting Act requires the major credit bureaus to offer one free credit report to consumers annually. The Act, however, specifically does not apply

to medical records. After some pressure from the FTC in the early 80's, the MIB has agreed to offer consumers one free

MIB Disclosure per year.

Not everybody has an MIB record, but ironically, in order to find out whether you're in the system, you must become part of the system. The rather stern voice of MIB's automated phone system warns that failure to provide a broad range of personal information to MIB (including your date of birth, Social Security Number, address, phone number, and name), will make it impossible for MIB to issue a report. So, even if your personal information was not in their databases before you called, it will be once you call. Neither the automated phone system nor the website, www.mib.com, indicates how your personal information will be used, how long it will be stored, whether it becomes a part of your MIB report, or whether it will be

shared with insurance companies.

I called the MIB Disclosure Report number (866-692-6901) and reluctantly provided the information. About one week later I received a letter from MIB: "Using the identification information provided as a part of your request to MIB, we have made a thorough search of our records... and cannot find any information."

Great. Now the MIB had all of my personal information, and I didn't have anything to show for it.

So I called customer service (781-751-6003), and requested that they purge my personal information from their database. A nice woman with a thick Boston accent answered the phone, and I learned a lot about their data retention policies.

When a consumer calls the Disclosure Report number, her information is divided into two files. Most of her identifying information is entered into a database and tagged with a unique reference number. Then her SSN is placed in a text log file with the same reference number. Both data sets are stored indefinitely, and MIB has no regular policy of purging either.

MIB uses a person's name, birth date, address, etc. to 1) Search for matching records, and 2) Make sure the person hasn't requested a report within the last 12 months. But MIB representatives insist that they do not use the text file with the SSN for anything except to ensure that you are the one requesting your MIB record. In other words, the MIB inappropriately uses the SSN as a proof-of-identity. This is yet one more reason why your

SSN should stay out of others' hands—to prevent medical impersonation.

Since the MIB claims not to use the SSN for any reason except "proof-of-identity," I suggested that they re-think their data-retention policy and purge the text log on a regular basis. The supervisor gave me a dubious reply, "Well I'm sure they have their reasons for keeping [the SSNs]." I didn't ask who "They" were or what "their reasons" might be; it was clear she didn't know. And I doubt that I could have talked to "Them" if I had asked, anyway.

I requested that they purge my SSN from their text log. After a long and good-humored conversation, the representative agreed to do me a favor and delete my SSN. However, it was clear that I was an exception to the rule.

Be sure to do your own cost-benefit analysis before ordering an MIB report. On one hand, the report is very helpful if you were recently turned down for insurance, or if your premiums seem abnormally high. On the other hand, you must yield some very sensitive data to MIB. Like most companies, they don't seem to have a regular data retention/ dump policy, which means that your personal information may be stored indefinitely. Regardless, if you have not applied for life, health, or disability insurance within the past seven years, your MIB report will look like mine—empty.

www.mib.com Medical Information Bureau Site
(866) 692-6901- Consumer MIB Record Disclosure
(781) 751-6003- MIB Customer Service ☐

Confessions of a Restaurant/Tavern Bathroom Advertisement Employee

Like many of you, I've been short on money for most of the time I've been in school. And as the premise of this column might suggest, I lead something of an expensive, indulgent lifestyle. In an effort to sidestep having to make behavioral changes, I sought odd jobs to make extra money. One of them entailed my traveling from restaurant/tavern to restaurant/tavern, replacing the framed bathroom advertisements found there with the movie poster for 2006's little-watched *Date Movie*.

This required that I find parking in front or near that bar, enter the bar, tell an employee what I was there to do, find the bathroom, find the many advertisement frames within the male bathroom, awkwardly wait until the women's bathroom was clear, repeat the process, replace the old poster with the *Date Movie* post using an allen wrench, and then take two pictures of my handiwork with two different digital cameras.

As you may have guessed, it was a big headache, and the monetary benefit was modest. There were, however, terrific aspects of this job: I went to some places where I do not ordinarily go and places I imagine many GW Law students also do not frequent.

One of the highlights for me was Turntables Lounge Jamaican Reggae and Disco, on Georgia Avenue, NW. This was another part of D.C. that I knew existed but had never had occasion to see. As I approached the address listed for Turntables, I passed fast food joints and dry cleaners,

most of which were covered with bars and bullet-proof glass. I parked outside of Turntables and somewhat nervously entered at around 7:45 pm on a Friday.

When I entered, it was the closest I've come in real life to the record skipping scene in *Animal House* — every eye turned to me. I was greeted with blaring, aggressive reggae-dancehall music. A friggin' enormous woman was the only person on the dance floor, holding court underneath an impressive mirror ball. She was sporting a full-body purple spandex outfit that had to have been painted on her. Off to the side of the dance floor was a toddler, probably three years of age, gazing approvingly at the dancer. There were twelve or so old men sitting in the back of the bar who gaped at me for a little while and then leaned in to discuss why this punk had just entered their bar with a camera and a messenger bag. I quickly ran to the back of the bar and explained to the bartender what I was doing, to which she huffed "whatever."

As I entered the bathroom, and probably forty-five seconds after I'd entered Turntables, the music abruptly stopped, mid song. There was a pregnant pause, and then the music started again. But this music was dramatically different from what was playing. Wait, I thought to myself, I recognize this song. Wow—it was Wham!'s "Careless Whisper" (which you might know as a George Michael-sung song and whose chorus goes "I'm never gonna dance again/guilty feet have got no rhythm." That song). Given everything I'd

experienced to that point, it was clear that the bar owners were trying to goad me. Message received. I finished taking my pictures and got out of there. I don't know that I am welcome back to Turntables.

I had other eye-opening D.C. experiences as well. As a staunch heterosexual, I've had very little occasion and opportunity to visit gay bars. Now, I've heard that they're fun and that straight women will occasionally head to gay bars to avoid people not unlike myself. Touché, ladies. But I have always wondered what goes on there, and this job presented my chance.

There were two geographical pockets of gay bars to which I headed. The first was a small but vibrant pocket of gay bars hidden near South Capitol Street, in the area near the new baseball stadium. In general, they were seedier and gloomier than most joints I've seen. The first places I entered, "Edge," and "Wet," treated me as if I were the first person in there for weeks. There was a sad-looking guy wearing a tight, long-sleeved shirt and a thong thoughtfully sipping his drink upon one of the stools. There were faux-oil paintings of well-endowed beefcake males adorning the walls. It seemed no cleaner than most bars I've been to, in fact, it looked just like the places when I hang out. I was offered a drink by one of the bouncers, which I politely refused. Thus far, the bars were

disappointing.

The second leg of my journey involved the Dupont Circle scene, which was more vibrant and energetic, more like what I had envisioned. As a laughably stereotypical start to my encounter, a Kylie Minogue music video greeted me as I headed

in to Chaos. I moved in to the bar through a wooly red curtain and encountered a group of about twenty men wearing Larry Bird-length basketball shorts dancing to Robbie Williams, accompanied by several dismal-faced, big-breasted girls cheering them on. Hmmm. In the other bar, whose name I cannot remember, I saw around fifty thin, clean cut, business casual, Banana Republic-model looking clones aggressively hitting on each other. This did not seem as fun an atmosphere as Chaos — this was business. This, too, was an intimidating environment.

I concluded that I do not have what it takes to hang out in either Turntables or in most D.C. gay bars.

I actually only did this job the one time, as it took too long and made me too little money. Now, it's always good for one to broaden one's horizons. D.C. is a large, diverse, city, and I got to see parts of its social culture that I didn't know existed. But, I'm okay with not returning to many of those bars, and I think everyone who saw me in these spots is probably okay with that, too. ☐

BIFF

Biff Around Town

FEATURES

MELISSA ANAGNOSTI

The Main Attraction

Here's the legal movie column as promised. Almost all of these movies are third party recommendations. Since I haven't seen most of them, I can't say with conviction that they're good movies, but I'm sure you can trust your fellow classmates' recommendations. I am prepared to see several of these movies.

41. **The Paper Chase** (DRAMA) starring Timothy Bottoms and Lindsay Wagner, directed by James Bridges. This recommendation comes from the professor who suggested the column. The story is about a star 1L at Harvard who unwittingly begins dating his professor's daughter. I haven't seen this one, but it looks good. The movie's tagline is "You have to choose between the girl you love and the diploma you've worked for all your life. You have 30 seconds."

42. **The Devil and Daniel Webster** (COMEDY) starring Edward Arnold and Walter Huston, directed by William Dieterle. I haven't seen this movie either, but it has a rave review online. The movie is about a poor farmer who sells his soul to the devil, Mr. Scratch, for seven years of prosperity. Then, the devil comes to collect, but politician and orator Daniel Webster defends the farmer in a proceeding to save his soul. The following is some dialogue from the movie:

Daniel Webster: You shan't have this man. A man isn't a piece of property. Mr. Stone is an American citizen... and an American citizen cannot be forced into the service of a foreign prince.
Mr. Scratch: Foreign? Who calls me a foreigner?
Daniel Webster: Well, I never heard of the de[vil]... I never heard of you claiming American citizenship.
Mr. Scratch: And who has a better right? When the first wrong was done to the first Indian, I was there. When the first slaver put out for the Congo, I stood on the deck. Am I not still spoken of in every church in New England? It's true the North claims me for a Southerner and the South for a Northerner, but I'm neither. Tell the truth, Mr. Webster — though I don't like to boast of it — my name is older in the country than yours.

43. **The Firm** (DRAMA) starring Tom Cruise, Jeanne Tripplehorn, Gene Hackman, and Hal Holbrook, directed by Sydney Pollack. This is the only film on this list that I have seen. It is the film adaptation of John's Grisham's book of the same title. The opening shows a young, hotshot attorney, Mitch (played by Tom Cruise,) taking his oath of admission into the bar. Mitch is later approached by the FBI to help bust his superiors for illegal money laundering. The movie is a cautionary tale about professional responsibility including client confidentiality and over billing. Pay close attention.

44. **12 Angry Men** (COMEDY) starring Martin Balsam, John Fiedler, Lee J. Cobb, Henry Fonda, and E.G. Marshall, directed by Sidney Lumet. I was told that this movie is a favorite of Professor Friedenthal's, so naturally I had to include it on the list. Henry Fonda plays the part of a lone dissenting juror in the murder trial of a young Puerto Rican who is accused of killing his father. The film is an examination of the concept of reasonable doubt and the prejudices of a white, all male jury.

45. **Inherit the Wind** (DRAMA) starring Spencer Tracy, Fredric March, Gene Kelly, and Dick York, directed by Stanley Kramer. I'm embarrassed to say that I have not seen this movie. The film — originally a 1955 Broadway play — is a fictionalized account of the Scopes Trial. The film follows the renowned lawyer, Henry Drummond (Spencer Tracy, portraying real life superlawyer Clarence Darrow), who is called upon to defend a teacher arrested for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution. Gene Kelly portrays the journalist E.K. Hornbeck, based on the real H.L. Mencken, who satirically reports on the trial and famously names it The "Monkey" Trial. Still a hot topic for debate, especially in Kansas, the movie's premise is anything but dated. □

Make Money! Earn Fame!

Write for Nota Bene

notabene@law.gwu.edu

FEATURES

I'm Sorry If I Offended You

The forced apology is one of the greatest traditions in this country today. With so many media outlets, whenever a celebrity, politician, or athlete says or does something offensive, it is bound to be picked up by someone within a day or two. This usually results in the original party backtracking from what they said or did with a varying level of sincerity. Within a week, everyone moves on and usually forgets that anything happened.

Rinse, repeat. These "apologies" can hardly be considered sincere, as they are mainly designed to show as little regret as possible. As future lawyers, we need to be able to sift through the morass of b.s. that will be thrown our way, so I will now attempt to decipher some recent sports apologies.

Tim Hardaway hates gay people apparently, as he so eloquently expressed last week on ESPN Radio in response to a question about John Amaechi. Given the severity of his remarks, Hard-

away was bound to issue a clarifying statement eventually. Let's take a look:

"As an African-American, I know all too well the negative thoughts and feelings hatred and bigotry cause. I regret and apologize for the statements that I made that have certainly caused the same kinds of feelings and reactions."

Hardaway attempts to deflect criticism away from himself by reminding us that he has also been the target of the same kind of venom that he dished out. This just seems to make his comments even dumber. Next, he apologizes if his statements were thought of as hateful or bigoted. He obviously doesn't think they are, or else he wouldn't have weaseled around this issue like that. Continuing to the second part:

"I especially apologize to my fans, friends, and family in Miami and Chicago. I am committed to examining my feelings and will recognize, appreciate, and respect the differences among people in our society. I regret any embarrassment I have caused the league on the eve of one of their greatest annual events."

Translation: I will pretend I don't hate gay people if you all will like me again.

Because of the bluntness of his original statement, I highly doubt that Hardaway is committed to doing anything that he just said he would. If he was, it wouldn't have taken the negative reaction he received from his comments to convince him that he needed to reexamine his views.

That was a really serious analysis, so let's move on to some more light-hearted incidents. **Carmelo Anthony** punched Mardy Collins during a game a couple of months ago and then immediately ran away like a scared chicken. In the aftermath, he issued the following statements:

"Last night's altercation with the Knicks escalated further than it should

have. I take full responsibility for my actions in the matter. In the heat of the moment I let my emotions get the best of me. I apologize to the fans, the Denver Nuggets, the NBA, my mother, and my family for the embarrassment I have caused them. I ask you all for your forgiveness."

A rarity, Carmelo is actually taking responsibility for what he did, although he tries to blame some of it off on his

"emotions," meaning he couldn't control himself so it's not his fault. In the end though, he admits that he embarrassed everyone, instead of the weasel-version ("I'm sorry IF I embarrassed anyone"). Overall, a solid apology.

Chargers line-backer **Shawn Merri-man** was suspended for testing positive to steroids. In addressing his alleged cheating, Merri-man claimed:

"I'm not a cheater. I don't be-

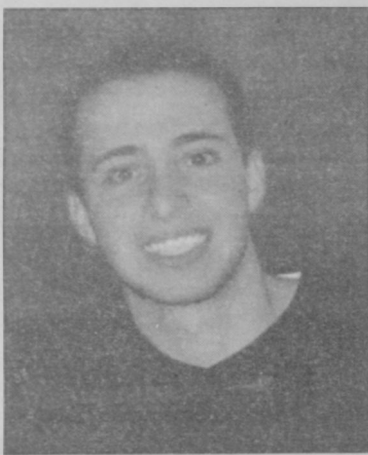
lieve in cheating the game. I have no reason to cheat the game. I'm about playing football and I'm a great football player. I'll continue to go out and show that and prove that. Hopefully over time people will see that I'm a terrific football player and a terrific person; that I don't condone cheating."

Umm, ok. Then why did you test positive for steroids? Maybe you took too many vitamin shots out of Miguel Tejada's locker when you toured Camden Yards in Week 4? I don't know; I'm not a doctor. Merri-man claimed that the positive test result was from a tainted supplement that contained nandrolone, which is a banned anabolic steroid. His lawyer blamed the entire situation on the lack of supplement regulation by the FDA. This is a growing concern in the nutrition industry, and I think we should all keep an eye on what kinds of unmarked white pills in unlabelled bottles we are currently taking.

Finally, for a bit of country flavor, we turn to **Michael Waltrip's** fiasco last week before the Daytona 500, when it was discovered that someone had added what was most likely rocket fuel to his car.

"I know I am good enough to do it without having any cheating on my car. I don't need it. I can go fast without it. I think we proved that today. This is my fault. You can't be skeptical of Toyota. You have to look straight at me."

Waltrip seems to be saying that he didn't need to cheat to be good, but he did anyway. I can understand his position because who wouldn't want to add rocket fuel to his car? Another explanation for this incident is a little case of corporate espionage. This is the first season Toyota is racing in the Nextel Cup, and I wouldn't be surprised if a certain American car company who hired a really annoying singer for their commercials sent someone down to Waltrip's garage with a can of rocket fuel. Think of the scandal! □



JONATHAN AUERBACH

Left-Wing Lock

DANIEL GREENSPAHN

The Top Ten

Ten Events to Add to Your Calendar

The bitterness of winter has settled in, and many of us have taken to hibernating in our apartments to stay warm. Here are ten upcoming events that make it worth emerging from under the blankets.

1. Law Revue (February 24, 7:30 pm, Lisner Auditorium)

Come enjoy GW law school's prized annual student-run variety show. Tickets can be purchased online at www.gwsba.com or at the information desk for \$12.00. Let the mockery begin!

2. 79th Academy Awards (February 25, 8 pm)

Even if you missed Babel, Dreamgirls, and The Departed, tune in to watch Ellen DeGeneres hosting for the first time, and find out if Borat will win for best adapted screenplay. Aren't you even a little curious to see a Sasha Baron Cohen acceptance speech?

3. DC Cares Orientation (February 27, 12-1 pm, Stockton 301)

Interested in volunteering but can't make a regular commitment? DC Cares will give students who attend this orientation at GW access to 80 volunteer projects a month. Volunteer as much or as little as you want. Work with kids, families, schools, housing, the elderly, the environment, and many others.

4. SBA Elections (February 28)

Flexible exams, raising money for student scholarships, and better wireless are all initiatives promoted by the SBA. Whatever policies or events are important to you, make sure to cast your ballot for President, Executive Vice President, and members of the Senate.

5. Spring Break (March 3-9)

"Would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that for one chance, just one chance to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom!"

6. Environmental Law Conference with Al Gore (March 15-18)

Learn more about climate change, environmental law, and career opportunities at the National Association of Environmental Law Societies annual conference. Al Gore will be a featured speaker. The cost to register is only \$15, but hurry because the February 23 deadline is fast approaching.

7. EJF Race for Justice (March 17, 8-10 am)

GW's fourth annual 5K race is a great opportunity to raise money for recent GW grads who have entered public interest careers. You can also donate online even if you are not participating.

8. Deaf Dog & the Indictments (March 17, 7-11 pm, Grog & Tankard, 2408 Wisconsin Ave NW)

The one-and-only rock band of D.C. judges will be performing at this Upper Georgetown bar. Come watch GW adjuncts Judge Burgess and Judge "Trash Can" Campbell as they take the stage. All rise.

9. Docs in Progress (March 27, 7-10 pm, Jack Morton Auditorium, 21st & H)

Join this monthly screening of documentary works-in-progress, and share your comments with filmmakers seeking feedback. It is only \$5 for two films – one on elections in the Congo and the other about hip hop.

10. Annual Cherry Blossom Festival (March 31 – April 15)

Washington's signature springtime event is the perfect opportunity to enjoy D.C.'s cultural opportunities . . . and to persuade family to visit and treat you to a free meal or two. □

FEATURES

ThingsToDoDC.com

BY EVELYN KIM

Life Outside the Law

If you are looking for a fun activity to do with your significant other or friends, to meet a potential significant other, or to make new friends, you may be interested in checking out the many activities and events organized by ThingsToDoDC.com. This organization is in the business of planning social and cultural events in the DC and Baltimore areas that are designed to appeal to young professionals. The types of activities include embassy parties, tastings, seminars and classes, dance lessons, concerts, guided tours, and sports and outdoor events just to mention a few. Membership is free. Once you sign up to be a member (free!), you can receive regular emails about upcoming events that may be of interest. You have to purchase tickets to the events in advance (they are usually cheaper if you purchase by a certain date), and the tickets range in cost depending on the activity. Tickets and a list of planned events are available online at the website. Events can sell out quickly, so it may be a good idea to make purchases in advance. Here is a select list of activities planned in D.C. for March to give you an idea of what ThingsToDoDC.com is all about:

- Huge Singles Party: 4 Minute Dating and Open Bar (March 2, Club Five, \$20)
- Argentine Tango and Party with Lessons and Live Music (March 3, H2O, \$15)
- Introduction to Boxing with Training, Sparring, and Workout (March 4, Keely's Boxing Gym, \$45)
- History of Classical Music Concert (March 7, Hyatt on Capital Hill, \$30)
- Seminar: Buying and Selling a Home in an Uncertain and Unpredictable Market (March 7, Hyatt on Capital Hill, \$25)
- Dupont Circle Art Gallery Tour with How to Buy Art Discussion (March 8, Dupont Circle, \$20)
- Martini Tasting at Ozio including Mixing Lesson, 6 Tastings, and Appetizers (March 8, Ozio, \$50)
- Taste of Spain: Dinner and Flamenco Dance Show (March 11, Las Tapas Restaurant, \$55)
- Salsa and Cha Cha Dance Lessons (March 15, H2O, \$15)
- Semi-Formal at the Colombian Embassy – Ambassador's Residence (March 16, Colombia Ambassador's Residence, \$55)
- Cooking Class: Recipes from NYC's Best Restaurants (March 17, Arlington, \$69)
- Introduction to Low Flying Trapeze and Aerial Dance (March 17, Baltimore, \$40)
- St. Patrick's Day Shamrock Jam with Live Band (March 17, RnR Nightclub, \$10)

ThingsToDoDC.com also organizes events aimed at those who are 40 and over. Check out the website for more details. □

Standing on a corner, frozen to the bone

You have to make a living, but you'd rather be at home

If you're a first-year at GW, you've realized by now that it's time to shave off the goatee, clip the shaggy undergrad mop-top, and hit up Ross Dress for Less for some gabardine threads in a swingin' charcoal pinstripe pattern. It's time to look for a way to spend post-1L summer, probably at a judicial or public interest internship.

Why, you ask? Because it will otherwise be a missed opportunity that potential employers will notice. Like it or not, the fact that everyone else has plans to keep busy means that you need to be setting some of your own to keep up with the law school arms race and to remain attractive to recruiters. Working under the supervision of a judge and his clerks is a fine way to get a good grasp of what jurisprudence is all about. You'll get some solid, probably needed real-world experience doing substantive research and writing legal memoranda. But more importantly, especially for those of you who have an eye drawn toward next fall, you have the chance to get a great writing sample and something cool to talk about in your interviews for 2L On Campus Interview Program.

To help you on your mission, I've compiled a list of tips. These are based on my own observations and self-assessment from my 1L interviewing from last year. It's geared more for men but I think that the ladies can tweak it easily and also learn something valuable.

Be neat, but be natural. A good suit is necessary. You can't go wrong with charcoal or navy. Model it in a three-way mirror, and ignore the name brand; it might only mislead you into thinking it's of better quality than it really is. After you get it cut and cleaned, get comfortable

wearing it. More importantly, look comfortable wearing it. Some of you may have never worn a suit before except to formal occasions such as weddings and funerals.

GARTELBY

A Story of K Street

You must leave behind this attitude and convince yourself that a good suit can make a man look like a million bucks in practically any situation. Go out to restaurants, movies, and clubs in a two-piece and cufflinks. You will learn what it means to own the room.

Watch movies. You're looking for a certain type of person with panache and charisma, the unflappable leading man who proves to be in constant control of a situation no matter how hairy it gets. Rocky! The Godfather! James Bond! Anything involving Will Smith! These are characters that have no fear of physical pain or death, even when it seems imminent. Instead, they exude self-reliance, conviction, self-confidence, and genuine affability – these are all vital seasonings that go into the gumbo pot of charisma. Put yourself in the right mindset. You are Michael Corleone, heir to a prestigious, multi-million dollar Mafia empire. You are not just another punk in box-toed Cole Haans who says he wants to study “international law.” Who do you think will command more respect?

Don't sweat the small stuff. Everyone is bound to make little screwups in protocol or etiquette. That's human. The

way to recover from this is to have faith in yourself and to come up with a good line to deliver in order to regain your momentum. Say for example that you're running late for an appointment with a judge, and instead of the standard white or blue dress shirt, you have to settle for a light green one with a matching tie – a minor faux pas that your career advisor would tell you to avoid. Well, you can't avoid it now, so what should you do if this gets you some extra attention from your interviewer? Instead of apologizing and biting your lip, you might try to put a positive spin on things. “Tiger Woods says he likes to wear red because it's his power color. I think green is my power color. It makes a strong but sublime impression, which is just what I like people to think about me.

Like it or not, the fact that everyone else has plans to keep busy means that you need to be setting some of your own to keep up with the law school arms race and to remain attractive to recruiters.

And you? What's your favorite color or shirt?” With those words, you've done three important things: 1) you've made the judge think about golf, something he probably likes to play in order to beat the drudgery of the bench; 2) you've defended an otherwise odd choice and shown that you have a personality worth remembering; 3) you've invited the judge to start talking about himself. These are all positive associations for you to have in the mind of a man who is considering you for a job.

Know why you are going there. I speak from experience: never just “settle” for anything you don't have a tangible desire to do – your insincerity will shine through and get you dinged on the spot. You must learn what it is you want out

of working for that particular employer and subsequently how to articulate that desire with the proper clarity and assurances of competence. Research them extensively. Take advantage of the mock interview sessions offered by the CDO. Find new ways to play up your strengths: every single thing on your resume needs to be tailored as to why you want to work in that office. You need to have your act nailed down so tightly that it becomes a script in your mind's eye from which you can recite at needed moments.

Don't worry about being pigeonholed. Even if you manage to get a summer stint in a large law firm – the perceived crème de la crème by many law students – you still have a lot of time and leeway to pursue different forms of work if you desire. Everything is a stepping stone to something else. I have parlayed a highly diverse set of work experiences into good jobs. Rather than conveying indecision and lack of commitment, my eclectic background portrays the flexibility and well-roundedness needed to adapt and excel in a new working environment. If you get work with a specialized employer, such as a small trusts and estates boutique or the National Labor Relations Board, don't fret about burned bridges. As long as you come out with something to show for it, it will have proved itself a good choice.

Smile. When in doubt, and when you're not talking, smile. It will help you make a connection. You must make it as genial as possible, based on something about the interviewer that you find appealing. If that doesn't work, think of something that makes you laugh. Think of how happy you'll be when you get out of school, get done with internships, and will never, ever have to go through any of this complicated dance of bluffing and puffing again for the rest of your lifetime. □

OPINIONS

Changing the Odds, Not Beating Them

If the American dream is to work hard, get ahead, and climb the economic ladder, then the rungs are moving farther apart and the wood is rotting. You can't reach for the next rung to pull yourself up if the one you're standing on isn't sturdy. Taking opportunities and risks requires security and support.

By JOSHUA TEITELBAUM

On the Left

Two trends — increased wealth inequality and increased social insecurity — are making it more likely that when people reach, they're more likely to fall instead. Increased inequality is about fairness, and increased insecurity is about fear. Combined, they can ruin the faith that people have in society, and their own chances for improvement. What we need more than ever is an Opportunity & Security Society to allow more people to help themselves, rather than an Ownership Society that increasingly puts opportunity and security in the hands of those who can afford it.

The statistics in the next few paragraphs on wealth inequality reveal an important truth with serious consequences: there has been a shift in who has how much — the likes of which we haven't seen since the Gilded Age.

Two economists, Thomas Piketty and Emanuel Saez, have produced new research describing the ever-increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of not just the top 1% of income earners (incomes starting at \$230,000), but the top tenth of one percent (\$790,000) and one hundredth of one percent (\$3.6 million). The numbers are startling. Since 1980, the share of income going to the top 1% of income earners doubled from 1980 to 2004, tripled for those in the top .1%, and quadrupled for the top .01%. Those 14,000 richest families in the top .01% have almost as much income as the poorest 20 million households combined. The richest 1% of households hold one third of all the wealth in the U.S. economy. The last time we saw income gaps like this in America was 1915 when the top .01% earned incomes 400 times the national average, and the top 10% had between 40 to 50 percent of wealth.

Today's numbers wouldn't be so troubling if everyone had the same chance to get to the top. But that's not the case. The Economist (yes, The Economist!) noted that "parental income is a better predictor of whether someone will be rich or poor in America than in Canada or much of Europe. In America about half of the income disparities in one generation are reflected in the next. In Canada and the Nordic countries that proportion is about a fifth." One of the ways this occurs is through an education system that replicates inequality rather than erases it.

In our second Gilded Age, the money itself isn't handed down, like in the early 20th century, but the opportunity and cultural tools for success are. At the 42 most selective state universities, 40% of freshmen come from families making \$100,000, while less than 20% of the country actually earns that much. At the University of Michigan, more students have parents making \$200,000 per year

than have parents making less than the national median of about \$53,000. The elite is competing with itself, and they're winning.

The resurgent inequality wouldn't be so troubling either if everyone down the pay scale were gaining too. But again, that's not the case. Between 1979 and 1997 the purchasing power of the top 1% rose 157%, while the median household's purchasing power rose only 10%. A rising tide used to lift all boats, but not anymore.

Predictably, this inequality is infecting our politics and influencing our policies. Princeton professor Larry Bartels studied the voting record of the Senate between 1989 and 1994 and found that the Senate was "very responsive" to the policy preferences of the upper third of the income scale, "somewhat responsive" to those in the middle third, and "completely dismissive" of those in the lowest third. Senators only voted for an increase in the minimum wage when it was preferred by their wealthiest constituents.

This shouldn't be terribly surprising considering that 35 of the Senate's 100 members are millionaire's themselves, and 95% of campaign contributions come from the 12% of households with incomes over \$100,000. In a society that's supposed to be a community, extreme wealth inequality segregates the desires of the left-out from the consciousness of the in-charge. Economic mobility becomes a bitter myth.

The only thing that does seem upwardly mobile these days is insecurity. As is expertly detailed by Jacob Hacker in *The Great Risk Shift*, the concerns of the working poor are now quickly becoming the fears of an unstable middle class. There has been a significant increase in income volatility for many Americans. The typical income loss for families that experienced one used to be 25%. Now, when they experience an income loss, it's closer to 40% of that income. Making matters worse, after riding through the lowest valleys of the new economic roller coaster, families rarely, if ever touch again their highest peak. These wild fluctuations cannot quantify what they most directly mean for the daily lives of those experiencing them — fear. Unexpected costs can throw a tight budget quickly out the window, along with the prospects for recovery.

We like to tell stories in this country about people who have 'beat the odds.' We mouth platitudes about equality of opportunity and point to the work ethic of the few who actually beat them as evidence. We say, "Only in America." We do this without recognizing the inherent injustice in the odds themselves. That they are evidence of the fact that life chances are different for different people because of where they came from or how much they had.

Well, 'the odds' are getting even longer these days. Those "American" stories are getting rarer, and America is in danger of losing its identity as the land of opportunity so long as we let these two trends continue. I think it's time we change the odds. □

Yes, there is an Income Gap. No, that doesn't mean that Marx was right.

There are certainly some big business Republicans out there who would tell you that there really is no reason to be worried about the widening income gap, but they are certainly not the majority, and I am certainly not one of them. Indeed there is a widening income gap in this country, and most statistics show that it is every bit as bad as my counterpart says. Worries about increased social insecurity are equally on-target, though we undoubtedly disagree about how the health care and retirement gaps should be addressed. I do not want to add a laundry list of stock solutions to the debate, but instead, I would like to add a bit of context.

The problem of income inequality is not uniquely American; it is a global issue with global causes and global solutions. Spend a few minutes searching "income inequality" on Google and you'll find articles dealing with the widening income gap in countries from China to Zaire. The problem stems from globalization and the rapid transition from intra-national to international corporate structures and trade. Because the problem isn't contained within America's borders, raising taxes or capping CEO salaries within those borders isn't the panacea.

America has seen the export of vast portions of its manufacturing base. We aren't an industrially focused economy anymore. Further, the global economy is malleable. It adapts quickly to changes in the competitive balance between states. If we become overzealous in raising taxes on business, investors, and management, we risk stifling the very thing that has replaced manufacturing as our main source of economic prosperity. The consequences of that could be devastating; America could see its place in the global economy slide, and while the rich certainly won't be as well off after such an event, neither will the rest of us.

Income inequality, while troubling and probably symptomatic of structural problems in our economic system, is a distraction from which we should remove our direct focus. The real problem is not the separation between those at the bottom and those at the top of the ladder.

The real problem is the inability of those at the bottom to start the long climb to the top.

The left is once again proposing expansion of the social welfare system to address the problem. Democrats love to spout about their safety net and how it

serves to preserve social mobility, but it's really just a feel-good measure that won't do anything but chill the incentive to succeed that is the hallmark of the American economy and the American dream.

What we need to do is generate opportunity by making education affordable and making sure that the economy grows enough to provide people with jobs and the training to do them. Sure the safety net

is a nice concept, and it certainly encourages some people to take risks, but it's not an answer in itself. If there aren't enough jobs and there aren't enough opportunities to take, then the safety net just leaves us with a world where the Federal government pays people to do nothing and then taxes them

for the luxury of it. Our economy is transitioning in tandem with the world economy. We shouldn't be trying to resurrect the luxuries of a bygone industrial era. We should be working to expand the economic focus that we have now so that future generations benefit from the prosperity that we facilitate.

The ownership based system that has defined the American experience is the reason why we are able to adapt to change, it's the source of our economic, social, and technological progress, and it's the reason why we have been so economically powerful for so long. We shouldn't abandon it just because it isn't working perfectly. We may want to tweak the tax system, or we may need to massage the architecture of our labor and employee benefit law systems, but we should not compromise our ability to compete in the global marketplace by abandoning our source of progress.

The American dream is based on the acquisition of wealth as a reward for commitment, hard work, and achievement. Abandoning the ownership system won't make the American dream easier to attain — it will eviscerate it.

Whatever measures we choose to deal with the situation domestically, we cannot deal with it as isolationists. We have to continue to press for workers rights and honest business practices in global trade agreements so that we aren't forced to backtrack just to stay competitive. Above all, we have to be careful that the solutions we choose don't undermine the incentives to achievement.

-Adam is a 3L, who is generally for unions, for both big and small businesses, for free trade, and against feel-good socialism. □

By ADAM J. BESTER

On the Right

Worries about increased social insecurity are equally on-target, though we undoubtedly disagree about how the health care and retirement gaps should be addressed.

The problem stems from globalization and the rapid transition from intra-national to international corporate structures and trade. Because the problem isn't contained within America's borders, raising taxes or capping CEO salaries within those borders isn't the panacea.

OPINIONS

Letter to the Editor

At the risk of politicizing what was probably intended as a genuine attempt at humor, I am writing to express my disappointment with the allusion to Ernesto "Che" Guevara and the slogan "Viva La Revuelucion" on the 2007 Law Revue T-shirts.

While I realize this seemed like a brilliant idea to someone at some point, as a Cuban-American I find it offensive, and I think it demonstrates a sad and misinformed understanding of history. Che Guevara is one of the most romanticized and popularly misunderstood historical figures of the 20th century. He was a well educated man with grand ideas about how to advance the goals of the working class in Latin America, a noble goal to be sure. However, Che Guevara was also a brutal man. A man who personally oversaw and carried out enough executions in Cuba to earn him the nickname "The Butcher of La Cabaña" (the fortress where he worked from following the revolution). He also detested the United States, and despised what he called America's "economic imperialism" throughout Latin America. The reality is, Che Guevara would have hated the commercialization of his image and his ideas because it trivializes what he was trying to do.

Therein rests the irony of these T-

shirts. This week my fellow classmates will dawn their "Viva La Revuelucion" shirts under their North Face jackets, wearing their Gap jeans, their Skechers shoes, all while attending law school (I must admit, an extremely revolutionary choice of profession) in the capitol city of the nation that Che Guevara hated the most. If the absurdity of this picture still escapes you, just imagine a caricature of Adolf Hitler with the slogan "Hail Law Review" on the back of a T-shirt. Would that upset enough of the law school community to make people think twice about this sort of thing?

That comparison may make some people uncomfortable. However, the Cuban revolution was to my family what the Holocaust was to Jewish families. The revolution tore my family apart, left some of my family members dead, took everything my family had, and shattered their dreams. To me and millions of Cuban exiles, there is nothing more serious than that reality.

Ultimately, I understand that the T-shirt's display was in jest. But the next time a student organization wants to be funny, I submit that they should also stop and think about the message they are sending.

Alejandro L. Sarria, 2L

□

Che Guevara is one of the most romanticized and popularly misunderstood historical figures of the 20th century.

Questions and Answers

I am back after a brief hiatus (details below). In lieu of writing a full fledged article this week, I have decided to copy some recent email conversations. To protect all interested parties, I've organized the article in a question and answer format.

Sam, your articles inspire me. Why didn't you write one last week? How could you be so inconsiderate?

I am sorry for letting you down. I know many people look forward to this article, and I enjoy being one of the few bright spots in your day. Unfortunately, I was on a one week boycott of the *Nota Bene*. A couple of days before my deadline, I was hit by a car while walking to work. Fortunately, I was able to remove myself from most of harm's way and avoid the worst impact. After a few bottles of aspirin, I contacted the guy who hit me and learned that he was paid to do it by the editors of the

Nota Bene. Other than hating me for my freedom, I can't imagine why they would do such a dastardly deed. Maybe they aren't fans of flexible exams, who knows? Whatever their reasons, I boycotted this paper for a couple of weeks.

I read last week's *Nota Bene*, and it said that the SBA wasn't going to bring a new journal and the issue was dead on arrival. Is this true?

This is yet another untruth spun by the same people who tried to assassinate me. We are still working very closely with the Deans on this issue. We've moved the ball substantially farther than in year's past and are going to keep pushing. In all honesty, it is going to take some time. We have consensus on what needs to be done. It is more a question of how to get there. As members of the Board for the Alumni Association, myself and last year's president, Eric Koester, will be forming an alumni committee on this issue. Hopefully the committee can help add pressure for a new journal that will ensure that the issue doesn't fall off in future SBAs.

I read that SBA elections are next week. Why should I run?

You should run because you want to leave the school in a better position than when you came in. You should run because you like working with and for your peers on all kinds of projects. You should run because you actually enjoy writing back page articles.

We all pay a lot of money to come here, and our careers are impacted by the reputation of the school. Why not try to improve the experiences of yourself and others? While I have been here, the SBA has advocated for a plethora of things: better wireless, more space, flexible exams, new journals, more money for student groups, a better CDO, etc. We haven't reached all of these goals, but there has been measurable progress.

Run because you want to move things forward.

Why are all of these undergrads asking me to vote for them? The only time I am ever around the rest of the

university is when I go clog my arteries at one of the Marvin Center's healthy eating options.

They harass because they can. As much as most of us would prefer to see GW Law stand separate from the rest of Foggy Bottom, we are still a part of the whole university. The SBA deals with these kids to ensure we get the money you pay in student activity fees back to the law school. By publication of this article,

we will have endorsed candidates for president and vice president. We need you to vote to help elect these candidates, so we can ensure the SBA gets your money back. Four years ago, we were receiving as low as 35% of the money you paid in activities fees. During the past two years, we have received a little over 80%.

This money goes directly back to you through student groups, cheaper



SAM JAMMAL

Message from the Prez

Barrister's tickets, and the GW Law Games. The SA elections matter because as a block we can swing the election one way or the other.

Whatever happened to flexible exams? It seems like that was all you were talking about for two weeks. I feel like you just took my survey answers and used them for scratch paper.

Actually I use your survey responses in an ancient ritual up on Mount Vernon, where myself and other unnamed individuals drip the survey results in water from Lerner, rum from the Faculty Conference Center, and the blood of a hippo before reciting ancient rituals to the supposed exam gods who were said to have populated the earth in the days before bluebooks and Extegrity. But seriously...

After weeks of going back and forth on policy options, the SBA, Deans, and Records Office are putting forth a policy decision that we believe balances the interests of everyone involved. We are pushing for the addition of 2-3 conflict days during the exam period, greater faculty support of take home exams, and allowance of students with family or medical emergencies to have the opportunity to take missed exams for a grade. Though not perfect, we feel that this new policy will help ease exam conflicts, while still being workable and ensuring integrity remains a priority. On February 20th, the Faculty Curriculum Committee will begin reviewing our policy proposal. My hope is that we can go before the entire faculty before my term expires. You can visit the SBA website for details on our policy report and the proposed policy.

What and when are the GW Law Games?

The GW Law Games will take place on Tuesday, April 10th. They are, in essence, an epic clash of the titans, as each class year and the faculty duke it out for the legendary Friedenthal Cup. The competition includes a 3 on 3 basketball tournament, joust, dance dance revolution, foosball, and much more. More details will arrive in the coming weeks. □

**Concerned about something?
Care to share your opinion?**

Submit a letter to the editor!

**notabene@law.
gwu.edu**

ODDS AND ENDS

Farm Life

Crossword 101

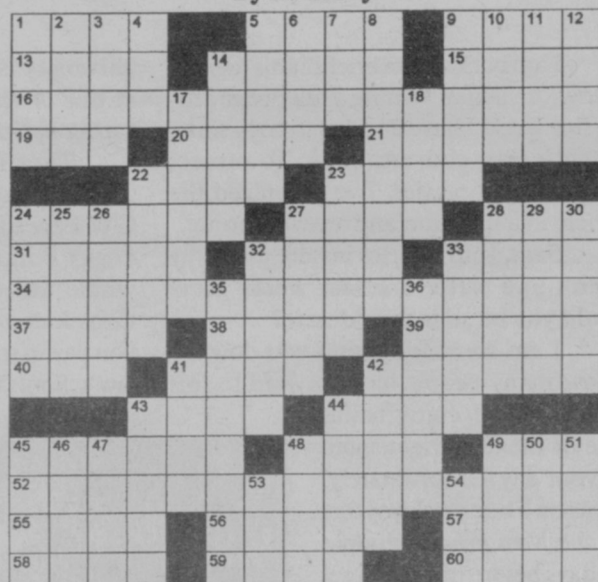
By Ed Canty

Across

- 1 Frist helper
5 Bridge term
9 Twain's Cavaleras jumper
13 Farm measure
14 Move sideways
15 Uncommon
16 Tuna
19 Barbie's beau
20 Cambodian moola
21 Dr. Suess, e.g.
22 Ardent followers
23 Bachelor girl
24 Add to the capital
27 Army sleep place
28 Indefinite number
31 Helps with dishes
32 King's name
33 Angry
34 Anvil
37 "___ that hurt!"
38 Cannisters
39 Fabled person
40 Financial wizard
41 Window segment
42 Radar noises
43 Seaweed
44 Vaccine type
45 Grammy winner Krause
48 State of prosperity
49 Downs antithesis
52 DA
55 Symphony orchestra need
56 Balanced wheels
57 Orthopedic's concern
58 Mail
59 Just got by
60 Causing little distress

Down

- 1 Deck of cards
2 Suffer
3 Facial gesture
4 International org.
5 Conifers
6 Golden calf
7 North Pole worker
8 Orthodontist's prescription
9 Fussess
10 Skin eruption
11 Cookie
12 Paraphernalia
14 Parisian artist's subject
17 Basketball Hall of Famer
18 Corn leftover
22 New
23 Slippers
24 Like some committees
25 Whooping cough
26 Approximate date
27 American pioneer
28 Slipknot
29 Army unit
30 Facilitates
32 Porcelain
33 Henry Bessemer's forte
35 Be inactive, like water
36 Sandwich filler
41 Scheme
42 Wide



- 43 Inquired
44 Aahed relative
45 Fussess
46 Grease
47 Computer picture
48 Dejected
49 John Wooden's employer
50 Jokes
51 Stick around
53 Provoke
54 Regret

Quotable Quote

*Farming looks mighty easy
when your plow is a
pencil, and you're a
thousand miles from the
corn field.*

... Dwight D. Eisenhower

By GFR Associates • PO Box 461 Schenectady, NY 12309 • Visit our web site at www.gfrpuzzles.com

Answer on Page 4

Q. When will you see a pole with a worm at both ends?

A. When you go fishing with a lawyer.

Q. What do you call a dozen sky-diving lawyers?

A. Skeet

Nota Bene

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